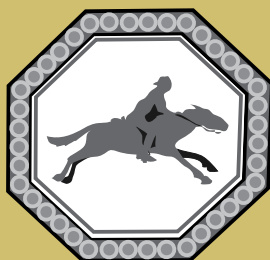


CROSS-TOWN PRESS



90 DEVONSHIRE

FEBRUARY 2008

ISSUE #2



Lobby Rendering by Goody, Clancy & Associates

Welcome to the second issue of Cross-TownPress, EPA New England's move newsletter. In this issue you will learn about the John W. McCormack Building at Post Office Square—from the building's rich history, to its interesting period details; and staff recollections of the building's former use. After reading about its most famous feline inhabitant, EPA New England employees will fully appreciate that their new future headquarters isn't just another office building.

State of the Move

Renovation progress at EPA New England's future Headquarters, the John W. McCormack Building, is right on track—with an anticipated move-in date still slated for May 2009. The necessary abatement and demolition work is almost complete, and overall building renovations are currently over one-third completed.

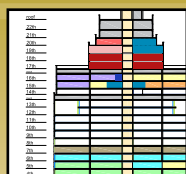
Interior renovation work, including installation of windows and construction of walls has already begun on the upper floors of the building. Crews are installing the interior finishes, as they work their way down from the top floors until they reach the bottom levels. EPA's technology gurus have used the move opportunity to design and improve EPA's data infrastructure and telecommunications systems. A brief scare was caused this winter when a piece of construction equipment caught fire inside the building. Fortunately, the fire caused minimal damage and should not derail renovation progress or EPA's ultimate move-in date.

Office Floor Assignments Complete

While detailed workspace plans for EPA New England employees are still being finalized, preliminary floor plans to determine which level each Office will reside, are in place. Fourteen of the building's 21 floors in the McCormack building will be occupied by EPA. Given the smaller surface area of each of the fourteen floors, (compared with our current horizontal layout on only two floors at One Congress Street), all of the EPA Offices will find that they are

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(cont.) State of the Move

spread among two or more levels. However, a grand, renovated central staircase and refurbished elevators will provide easy access for employees to navigate between floors.

Puzzled? Visit our New Move Kiosks

As the countdown to May 2009 is in full swing, visit one of the Move kiosks and displays located on the 10th and 11th floor lobbies of the Boston office, and the Chelmsford lab. The displays offers a visual depiction of progress in action as we complete a large jigsaw puzzle of the McCormack Building, keeping pace with the percentage of building completion. The displays will be changed periodically and will include: historical information, building design and details on workplace plans, area maps and information on the building's green features. ❁

For this newsletter and more information on the move:

The public Web site is: www.epa.gov/region1/about/move

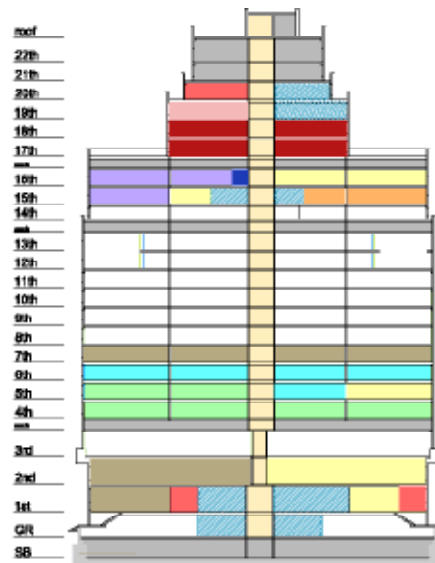
The employee Web site is: <http://r1-gis-web2.r1.epa.gov/move>



EPA Occupancy - Block & Stack Floor Plan

Legend:

- Office of the Regional Admin.
- Office of Regional Council/ NEPA
- Office of Civil Rights
- Office of Admin. & Resource Mgmt.
- Office of Ecosystem Protection
- Office of Environmental Stewardship
- Office of Site Remediation & Restoration
- Criminal Investigations Division
- Office of the Inspector General
- Union
- EPA Shared Use Space



Find your Office Level(s)

This block and stack depiction provides preliminary floor assignments by Office.

A more detailed layout scheme of future amenities and building layout is available on EPA New England's intranet: <http://r1-gis-web2.r1.epa.gov/move/>

Staff Recollections of the Building's Past

Meet Mitze

A feline friend to criminals and judges alike, a black and white cat named "Mitze" lived for nearly two decades in the lobby of the McCormack building. Named by his original Hungarian owners, Mitze was inherited by several subsequent proprietors of the building's lobby coffee shop. Legend says that he spent most nights and weekends alone inside the shop. The story of how he came to the building is a mystery, but he is believed to have lived a long and happy life.

EPA New England's own, Sally Burt, while working at the McCormack Building for the U.S. Attorney's office, recounted a time when Mitze walked out of an otherwise empty elevator while the court offices awaited the arrival of a witness to the Grand Jury. "Seeing a cat exit an empty elevator on the 15th floor provided much-needed amusement on an otherwise tense afternoon," recalled Burt.

Mitze was the subject of a Boston Globe obituary of sorts, which reported, "Where lives change in the moment it takes a jury to read aloud a verdict, Mitze was a soothing sight." Others recalled that Mitze was mostly content to sit, sphinx-like, outside the shop next to the soda machine. When he began to grow fat from so many people slipping him treats, his owners posted a sign, requesting restraint. More than a few ignored the entreaty, luring Mitze outside the view of his owner for a clandestine tidbit.

Judge Skinner's Courtroom of "Civil Action" Fame

That's right, Judge Walter Skinner's Courtroom, where it all took place in a "Civil Action" was in the McCormack Building. Although EPA New England's involvement in the famed trial mainly involved behind the scenes work to respond to last minute pleas, EPA New England's team of crack enforcement attorneys were kept busy at the Courthouse during the

trial—where many requests were made with only a few hours notice to meet the schedule of the court proceedings. It's ironic that the site of one of the most notorious environmental trials in history will now also be the home to EPA New England.

Susan Studlien on Returning to Her Former Digs

"What a difference it will be to work in the court house every day, surrounded by friends and co-workers instead of foes!" I spent the first years of my legal career in the late 1970s as an attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union litigating dozens of class action prisoners' rights cases in the federal district court and the first circuit court of appeals, then located on the 12th and 15th floors of what is now the McCormack Building. My memories of the Post Office and Court House are of countless oral arguments and negotiation sessions, and of the rehearsals that preceded them in the elevators, stairwells and hallways of the building while I waited for proceedings to begin. Permanently etched in my mind are the terrazzo patterns in the marble floors and walls that I stared at while practicing arguments, the dauntingly high ceilings and the yellow and red lights on the lecterns that told me I was running out of time.



Photo: Goody, Clancy & Associates

Interior Spotlight—Preserving Historic Features

The McCormack Building was found to contain "some magnificent examples of art deco architectural details executed in a wide variety of materials," in its 1995 Historic Building Preservation Plan. This plan evaluated the Building's interior spaces to pinpoint unique areas that deserved extra care and effort during renovation and design. Efforts to preserve these designated historically significant spaces were at the forefront in the minds of the architects and planning team.

Among the areas that the architects sought first to preserve were the original courtrooms and main library, the ground floor entrance lobby and five of the elevator lobbies. Wood wainscoting, marble walls and rusticated plaster are some of the intact finishes encountered in these rooms. Courtroom benches and jury boxes will be removed from some courtrooms to accommodate a change in use from courtroom to meeting space. Plans to preserve the courtroom ceilings, which are described as "ornate, most with ornamental coffers or trim embellished with decorative plaster details," are also part of

the renovation design. Lighting and paint improvements will match the original design.

Among other improvements, the first floor lobby ceiling will be restored to reestablish the original character of the space, with paint colors resembling the original design. The ground floor lobby, originally used as a service entrance for the post office, will be used as the main entrance—after alterations for security needs. The lobby walls and ceiling will be restored with fixtures similar to the original. The terrazzo floors with marble inlay will be restored on the historical corridors. The central stairway leading from the main entrance to the grand first floor lobby will be restored to improve the connection between upper and lower lobbies.

The overall design strategy embraced the building's original interior presence by salvaging and restoring as much of the original as possible, while improving and incorporating green features to meet future needs.

Building a Place in History

The U.S. Post Office, Courthouse, and Federal Building, was constructed in 1931-33, as an expression of Boston's national stature and demanding growth. The building became one of the finest art-deco style buildings in the region in the 20s and 30s. It was a product of the Public Buildings Act of 1926, the first Congressional authorization for new federal construction programs since 1913—unleashing a floodgate of backlogged projects that helped the government jump-start Depression-related job programs. Construction of the building at the time illustrated early efforts of political leaders to use large federal projects to help offset the impact of the Great Depression and spur the economy.

The new Federal Building replaced an overcrowded Post Office and Sub-Treasury Building that occupied the site since the 1870s. Although, Boston's Great Fire of 1872, leveled much of Boston's emerging commercial district, the original Post Office building was miraculously spared (see inset for more information on the Great Fire). Explosive growth in the 1910's gave Boston the distinction as the fourth largest postal district in the U.S. by 1931, providing the political capital needed to move forward with plans for a new larger postal building and federal courthouse.

The Building was one of several large-scale federal construction projects initiated just prior to the Great Depression that served as models for various public works programs. Leaders realized that construction of federal building provided an important boost to the local economies by offering employment opportunities to

both building contractors and materials suppliers. In 1930, New England's congressional delegation waged a successful lobbying effort to substitute more expensive New England granite for Indiana limestone as the primary exterior facing material. Representatives from the granite-producing towns of Chelmsford and Quincy led the successful campaign to raise the project allocation from \$4.5 million to \$6 million. In the end, a combination of several eastern granites were used on the exterior—polished dark Quincy granite in the basement stories, Concord granite for the first two stories, and Chelmsford granite for the upper stories.

Although Art Deco was in vogue at the time, it was an unusual choice for Boston, known as a conservative city. But critics praised the building, saying the Art Deco elements “created a romantic urban image, reflective of the modern city.” The building is the tallest of Boston's four art-deco styled buildings from the 1930s. The other three were: the United Shoe Machinery at 138-164 Federal Street, State Street Bank & Trust now known as 75 State St, and the Batterymarch Building (now the Hilton Hotel at 89 Broad St.). These four buildings together changed Boston's skyline forever.

In honor of one of the Commonwealth's most powerful and respected politicians, the building was rededicated in 1971/2 as the John W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse. McCormack had dedicated most of his adult life to state and national politics. He rose to become Speaker of the House from 1962, until his resignation in 1971.

Article Source: J.W. McCormack P.O. & Courthouse, Historic Building Preservation Plan, Ann Beha Assoc. March 1995



1895 Map Courtesy of Boston Redevelopment Authority

Historical Fact – Boston's Great Fire of 1872

In November of 1872, Boston's Great Fire leveled much of the emerging downtown commercial district but spared the city block where the predecessor to the John F. McCormack building was sited. The nearby park that exists today 'Post Office Square' was originally cleared by this fire. A bronze tablet on the Milk Street side of the building commemorates a point where the fire was miraculously halted. The fire destroyed 776 buildings, 1,000 businesses, and 14 lives were lost. It is estimated that the fire cost \$1.7 B (1980 dollars).